

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

United Nations Development Programme

Cambodia

[Sustainable Land Management]

[09-April-2008 – 31-December-2011]



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**Implementing Partners/
Responsible parties:** Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
Country Programme Outcome: #3

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Executive Summary

Key Outcome and Results: Three arenas of achievements in capacity development may be cited: policy/ program development; generation of decision support information; and tools and knowledge and skills gained by key MAFF personnel.

At the policy level, the Project generated a new NAP that followed the new protocols of UNCCD. The GM regards the Cambodia NAP as a possible model for other countries in terms of observance of new UNCCD protocols. Adherence to NAP principles and strategies has been incorporated in pertinent sections of the NSDP. Specifically, the 2011 NSDP requires the RGC to "Implement the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat land degradation and desertification in Cambodia (page 122). Also SLM principles and strategies were disseminated to at least 5 districts and 25 communes so that they can include in local plans and programs. An initial case study indicated slight incremental investments in SLM in a sample commune.

The project assembled or generated information important for decision making by the MAFF. Examples are information on nature of land degradation in agricultural lands and 100 best practices in sustainable land management and Practices. The Project further developed planning and decision support tools for use during and after the project. Examples are the tool for developing the Integrated Financing Strategy for SLM in Cambodia and methods to strengthen the Agro ecosystems Analysis (AEA).

The project supported 2 sets of learning modalities. The first modality would be formal training events conducted by the Project while the second modality are the various series of planning and knowledge sharing events (diagnostic and planning workshops etc) facilitated by the project that provided hands on exposure and context knowledge to participants. Over 2400 senior planners, specialists, and extension officers mostly from MAFF, MoI and 25 communes in 3 provinces, as well as college students benefitted from 74 learning events. Selected participants have used increased knowledge in SLM in developing the NAP, contributing to the NSDP, in identifying and analyzing land degradation issues and best practices and in conducting echo trainings to other personnel.

The Project conducted a TNA and prepared schematic designs of SLM training topics implemented under the SLM Project and to be further used during NAP implementation. Two thirds of the planned of the topics were implemented. The TNA is being used as basis for dialogue with potential partners who can help finance specific courses or provide technical expertise for training needs. Technical collaboration was established with at least three international/.regional partners: World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), FAO Land Management Department and the World Overview for Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). Six priority project concepts have been prepared. The GEF 5 has provided USD 1.2 Million Allocation for Land Degradation in Cambodia.

The project incorporated consultation processes within its various activities. The MAFF exercised direct oversight of NAP preparation, ensuring that the content of NAP was consistent with NSDP. MAFF technical personnel **lead or co leads technical studies.**

Of the total budget of 1,077,349.41, a total 970,115.49 or 92% was disbursed. Twenty seven percent was used to support project costs. The UNCCD based Global Mechanism or GM directly supported several activities related to NAP preparation. The inputs supported by the budget generated the NAP that serves as the major policy instrument to guide future programs of the RGC as well as donor portfolio to enhance SLM over the next 10 year period. The project utilized resident expertise from MAFF in completing the NAP in addition to the external TA provided by the project.

Implementation constraints: New protocols for NAPs under the UNCCD required realignment of resources to give more attention to the preparation process and thus affecting the deliverables for other components. Eventually, the decision was justified in the end in terms of the quality of NAP generated and the direction it will give to future programs. Project management styles at the operational level,

problems in recruitment of resident technical teams policies and staff turnover affected operations. Timely availability and quality of some Technical assistance personnel were also major challenges.

Lessons learnt. The direct and continuing involvement of the UNDP in project management is vital even if this is a NEX project. This is especially true for projects that develop planning documents linked to time bound international commitments.

There is a very competitive market for local expertise given the growth of development projects in Cambodia. Extra ordinary efforts may be needed to ensure timely availability of TA especially for knowledge intensive projects such as this Project. Unclear mechanisms for enforcing recommendations of the senior international TA to ensure quality assurance of outputs of national TA affected the quality and timeliness of TA outputs.

NAP preparation requires at least two years given the new protocols of UNCCD and the capacity building requirements needed for ample inputs from the lead agency. GM involvement in providing regular and more timelier technical feedback can be helpful for the quality of NAP.

There is expertise within RGC that can be tapped for NAP preparation. MAFF has also committed to provide this expertise. However, without appropriate incentive systems, there is difficulty in accessing this expertise notwithstanding government commitments for these.

Recommendations for future GEF and UNDP Projects: Planning exercises to meet international commitments are knowledge intensive efforts and require substantive and timely supply of TA over very short planning periods.

Future review of UNDP TA recruitment policies need to factor in the growing number of technical expertise in RGC agencies (several with overseas graduate degrees). There is also need to recognize that hiring external consultants creates tension (and demoralization) among resident experts in the RGC. There is a need to develop an incentive system that would enable future projects to fully tap and compensate resident expertise while at the same time acceptable to UNDP hiring policies.

Future Steps for SLM in Cambodia: Future NAP preparation projects should give at least two years for actual preparation due to the new UNCCD requirements. The immediate step after NAP approval is the preparation of an effective communication strategy. MAFF and UNDP need to work together to sustain the momentum of the dialogue by mobilizing resources (small grants, TA etc) that can support small pilots on the ground while larger funding is being negotiated.

To set the stage for implementing the above recommendations, the Project will be extended for 3 months from May to August 2011. MAFF and UNDP will collaborate with GLM to undertake measures to consolidated gains achieved under the project so far. Among the key targets is the fine-tuning of the NAP, and the development of integrated investment framework or IIF to further guide public planners and donors on harmonizing investments. The best practices information will also be further disseminated. Early impacts of training and mainstreaming activities will be studied further as input to future programs. Project preparation will commence, building on the USD 1.2 Million start up funds made available for SLM under GEF 5.

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United Nations Development Programme, Cambodia

[Sustainable Land Management]

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I. Context

Land degradation in Cambodia is a serious threat to the country's food security, considering that the majority of the population are poor and are dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. Soil erosion and loss of soil fertility are key forms of land degradation brought about by both human and natural causes. This project addresses the above concerns, taking off from the commitment of Cambodia to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

The Project supports the National Strategic Development Plan NSDP particularly in the agriculture sector specifically the strategies for land productivity and diversification. It supports two UNDAFF outcomes i.e. productivity improvement and diversification and increased and equitable access to and utilization of land resources. It also supports CPAP Outcome 4 which aims to improve capacity of national/sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable land management while ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process. The project has three outcomes and several outputs, namely:

Outcome (1) Completion of a National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification

- Output 1.1: NAP validated through local, provincial and national workshops.
- Output 1.2: NAP finalized adopted by the RGC.
- Output 1.3: Nation-wide dissemination of the contents of NAP, among all levels of Cambodia's society

Outcome (2) Enhancing human resources and institutional capacities on SLM;

- Output 2.1: Capacity development and enhancement of human resources and institutional capacity for SLM at local, provincial and national levels, including but not limited to training on landscape-based land use planning, GIS, resource economics, Payment for Environmental Services and data collection and analysis.
- Output 2.2: Decentralized Community Learning Networks (CLN) for SLM and NRM.
- Output 2.3: Regional landscape-based land use framework developed for the Cardamom Mountains and its buffer areas (covering protected and non-protected areas within Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces).
- Output 2.4: Demonstrations of SLM best practices and ecosystem-based and diversified rural livelihoods in Kampong Speu, Takeo and Preah Vihear provinces
- Output 2.5: Study and policy analysis to provide insights to relevant institutions to enhance gender participation in SLM

Outcome (3) Mainstreaming SLM into national and sectoral policies and regional planning.

- Output 3.1: SLM is incorporated into the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and national sectoral policies and regional planning. This will include policy analysis to provide

insights to MAFF to promote and coordinate sustainable forestry and agricultural land management for rural livelihood improvement.

- Output 3.2: Sustainable land management integrated into provincial development planning
- Output 3.3: Resource mobilization for SLM through the development of project concepts and a medium term investment plan

The key stakeholders are the MAFF, local authorities; NGOs, farming communities. The Global Mechanism is the major technical partner. The direct beneficiaries would be the key RGC officers whose knowledge and skills in SLM would be expanded. The indirect beneficiaries would be farming communities and their commune councils in at least 3 Provinces

In February 2009, upon advice of the Global Mechanism or GM, resources for physical development activities in 3 provinces were realigned to support NAP preparation. This was because of the new protocols of UNCCD which required more attention and support from the limited staff and resources of the Project.

The project was implemented from April 2008 to April 30 2011. It was executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and received guidance from Project Management Board .The UNDP and Global Mechanism also provided technical guidance. The total budget of the project was US\$ 1,203,000 of which US\$ 598,000 came from the GEF increment and US\$200,000 funded by UNDP.

II. Performance review

Progress Review

1. Overall progress towards the UNDAF outcome

The Project supports selected outputs of 3 major stated outcomes under the UNDAF:

Support UNDAFF Outcome 1 and 2. The project specifically supports 2 Outcomes namely.

- **Outcome 1.** “Increased resources are mobilized and improving productivity and diversification of agriculture” **Specific relevant output:** Strategic plans for agriculture and rural poverty in place following sustainable development principles and commitments
- **Outcome 2.** “Increased and equitable access to and utilization of land, natural resources, markets, and related services to enhance livelihoods”. **Selected Relevant outputs:** Strengthened capacity to enforce international conventions (environment, human rights, labour, indigenous peoples) related to land and natural resources; and Enhanced management capacity of government and empowerment of local communities in sustainable use of natural resources

The project led the generation of a 10 year NAP to guide public investments to support sustainable agriculture and land management. It also enables the RGC to fulfill its commitments to UNCCD. The capacity building initiatives of SLM such as increased information on land degradation and best practices identification help strengthen MAFF capacity to better facilitate adoption of SLM practices at the local level

The NAP allows the MAFF to support the UN climate change initiative by introducing landscape based and farm based practices that protect and regenerate local forests, reduce soil erosion and reduce vulnerability to floods and droughts.

2. Support to CPAP

The Project supports the CPAP outcome 4 “improved capacity of national /local authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that respond to the needs of the poor. “

Specifically the Project supported the development of capacity to develop the NAP for SLM through better access to information on land degradation, knowledge of best practices to address this and strengthening of selected skills and tools of MAFF personnel to SLM planning and implementation.

3. Capacity development

There are arenas of capacity development that may be cited: policy/ program development; generation of decision support information and tools and knowledge and skills gained by key MAFF personnel.

Mainstreaming to National and Local Policies and Programs. At the policy level, the Project generated a new NAP that followed the new protocols of UNCCD. The GM regards the Cambodia NAP as a possible model for other countries in terms of observance of new UNCCD protocols. Some of these protocols include the use of science based information; utilization of best practices and early attention to financial and resource mobilization concerns.

At the national level, the NAP will serve as national guide for strategic and annual investment decisions to establish sustainable management practices particularly in the agriculture sector. Among the non traditional investment areas of NAP are the a) introduction of soil conservation and forest regeneration and agro forestry systems using the landscape (watershed) approach as well as the mobilization and improved management of the private agribusiness sector towards SLM.

Adherence to NAP principles and strategies has been incorporated in pertinent sections of the NSDP. Specifically, the 2011 NSDP requires the RGC to "Implement the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat land degradation and desertification in Cambodia (page 122). Among many concerns, it calls for further implementation of the National Action Programme (NAP) in relation to the mainstreaming and raising of awareness of gender issues in agriculture sector."

SLM principles and strategies were disseminated to at least 5 districts and 25 communes. At the same time the communes' capacity for identifying and analyzing SLM issues has been enhanced by the incorporation of SLM in the extension tools of the MAFF such as the Agro ecosystem Analysis or AEA in selected communes. The exact impact of the above interventions on capacity development at the local levels is in the process of being determined. The results of case study in one commune in Preah Vihear indicate a modest increase in SLM related investments resulting from the 2009 information campaigns.

Institutional support. Information and Tools to support Institutional decision making. The project assembled or generated *information* important for decision making by the MAFF. These would include:

- Information on nature of land degradation in agricultural lands
- Economic value of natural resource assets that are prone to degradation
- Trends and resource mobilization trends and options for SLM
- TNA of key RGC departments involved in SLM and training plan on SLM
- Detailed TNA of the DALRM and training course design
- The first batch of 100 best practices in sustainable land management
- Information on key factors affecting women participation in SLM
- Practices and lessons learned on managing soil service departments

Further as part of institutional support, the Project assisted in the development and application of *planning and decision support tools* for use during and after the project

- It formulated an Integrated Financing Strategy for SLM in Cambodia conditions using analytical tools recommended by the Global Mechanism
- It developed consensus with MAFF DAE on how to strengthen the Agro ecosystems Analysis (AEA) tool to include SLM related information as input to commune level planning

- It customized UNCCD protocols for identification and documentation of best practices into Cambodia conditions. This was applied in two of 3 topics under the best practices initiative
- It developed a range of events and publications on SLM

The use of above information and decision support tools expanded capacities of MAFF Staff to assess the land degradation situation; identify and analyze of best practices in SLM; and assess contributions of important sectors such as local authorities and women. This has led the development of a land degradation report and 12 land degradation maps as well as the development of selected extension materials. This is also expected to help develop more relevant programs to SLM as well as improve the collaboration with other sectors including local authorities and the private sector.

Individual capacity strengthening. The project supported 2 sets of learning modalities. The first modality would be formal training events conducted by the Project while the second modality are the various series of planning and knowledge sharing events (diagnostic and planning workshops etc) facilitated by the project that provided hands on exposure and context knowledge to participants. The topics covered by the two types of learning modalities are:

- Causes and effects of land degradation
- Problem soils and technical mitigation strategies
- Identification and documentation of best practices in 5 themes of SLM
- Agro forestry principles and practical prospects in Cambodia
- Identification of actions to combat land degradation using the watershed approach
- Best management practices in governance of public soil service agencies
- Planning student research on soil management and economics of SLM
- GIS and English

The type of participants who have benefitted from the above learning modalities are national , provincial officers of MAFF in 3 provinces and D& D personnel also in 3 provinces

- 16 Members of the TRT (1 Female) and NAP Coordination Group (Department Heads, Deputy Department Heads from 8 departments)
- 8 Members of the PTT (1 Deputy Department Head, 2 Unit heads, 5 technical officers)
- 27 MAFF Provincial Staff (2 females) in 9 provinces
- 18 Provincial Staff of the Ministry of interior involved in facilitating district and commune level planning
- Officials from 5 Districts and 25 Commune in 3 provinces (PVH, KPS and TKO)
- 6 Graduating students (3 females) from Royal University of Agriculture (RUA)

4. Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries

The project primarily focused on MAFF and D&D personnel and selected personnel from other agencies as direct beneficiaries:

| Key RGC personnel | Knowledge and skills gained | Indicators of benefits |
|---|---|--|
| MAFF | | |
| 16 Members of the TRT and NAP Coordination Group (1 female) (Department Head, Deputy Department Heads from 8 departments) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land degradation issues Cost of land degradation Integrated Financing Strategy Watershed approach | Completion and positive review of the draft NAP following key protocols by the UNCCD under its 10 year Strategy and supported by the GM. |
| 2 MAFF Senior officials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance of a National Service Department for Soils Services (visit to Philippine Bureau of Soils) | Documentation ongoing |
| 8 Members of the PTT (1 Deputy Department Head, 2 Unit heads, 5 technical officers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land degradation issues and technical strategies Documentation of best practices GIS and English | Two PTT members are now senior resource persons in key SLM related training conducted by MAFF. One member has become a technical English translator for SLM technical papers |
| 20 DALRM Staffs (5 females) | Note : Detailed TNA conducted ; first training course designed and due for implementation | Potential benefits to be achieved once course is completed |
| 27 MAFF Provincial Staff (2 females) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> local land degradation issues and technical strategies | Documentation ongoing |
| D& D and Local Authority | | |
| 11 provincial Planning Facilitators (PFT) and District Planning Facilitators (DFTs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporation of SLM in local plans and resource mobilization strategies at the local level | 2 PFTs in Preah Vihea can share SLM knowledge to DFTs and World Vision Cambodia (NGO). |
| 25 sets of Commune officials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporation of SLM in local plans and resource mobilization strategies at the local level | *Increase in SLM projects in at least one commune studied as reported by the study of SLM Proj Coordinator *Inclusion of SLM in local agricultural extension planning processes(AEA) by the commune and MAFF field offices and in commune level discussions |
| Partner NGOS and students | | |
| 20 staff members of NGO Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of best practices in agriculture, community NRM | documentation ongoing |
| 6 Senior Student interns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLM principles Design and implementation of research on SLM practices Analysis of commune investment trends | *6 students received academic citations for outstanding thesis covering the topic on SLM. One student helps facilitate a working group meeting of major SLM related conference |

The key gain among the direct beneficiaries (MAFF and D& D personnel would be the knowledge and relevant skills on SLM have that been shared and learned in varying degrees by MAFF personnel. The

key gap is that information on best practices and practical skills in SLM have only started to be disseminated to farming communities. Thus the benefits to indirect beneficiaries are limited.

Implementation strategy review

1. Participatory/consultative processes

The project incorporated the consultation processes within its various activities. For instance, the conduct of basic activities such as determining the nature and extent of land degradation involved intensive interaction with farm communities and local governments in representative areas. MAFF Operations personnel at the Provincial and District level participated in sessions that identified technical mitigation strategies for problem soils. NGOs on the other hand were involved in the identification of 80 of 100 best practices in SLM. Annex 1 indicates the key consultative processes done under the project

2. Quality of partnerships

MAFF and UNDP worked collaboratively through the Board to provide direction the project. Partnerships with other line agencies were task based and happened during consultation workshops. NGOS were consulted in the identification of best practices.

The Global Mechanism (GM) was a major partner in the development of protocols for preparing the NAP as well in the quality review of plans. GM was also directly involved in preparing two studies-integrated financing strategy (IFS) and cost of land degradation (CLD). The Project under the leadership of the DAE collaborated with IFAD in identifying and piloting measures for supporting the conduct of AEA in 57 IFAD assisted communes in PVH, KRT and RK provinces. The Project also participated in the development of protocols for community learning networks in IFAD sites.

The World Agroforestry Center and the Forestry College of the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) became informal partners in identifying prospects for agro forestry in Cambodia as well as documentation of local practices in agro forestry. The planned South - South collaboration with Bhutan was limited to an exchange of materials. The SLM ITA also served as external evaluator of the Bhutan SLM project. The NAP of Bhutan served as one of the references for Cambodia NAP.

3. National ownership

As a NEX project, the Project was basically run by MAFF. A Project Management Board composed of mostly MAFF senior officials steered Project directions on a quarterly basis, reviewed reports; conducted two reflection sessions/ retreats and directly addressed project risks and issues. Technical assistance deliverables were reviewed and endorsed by MAFF before payment by the UNDP.

Counterpart funds in kind in the amount of USD 62,450 as well as office and communication facilities were provided by MAFF. The MAFF also provided regular personnel who were members of the PTT. The PTT members spent at least two days a week with the project from 2008 to 2009. The SLM Project office was based in MAFF Headquarters.

The MAFF through a Technical Review Team, exercised direct oversight of NAP preparation, ensuring that the content of NAP was consistent with NSDP. The UNCCD Focal person communicated the NAP to the senior leadership in the RGC. MAFF technical personnel served as members of the land degradation study Investment programs in the NAP were based on technical discussions with key MAFF Departments and guided by the Strategy for Agriculture and Water, which is a joint program with the MOWRAM. MOWRAM provided water related data while MOE and MLUPC provided information on land use planning and conservation initiatives. The NAP underwent several consultations with farmers, NGOS, business and donor communities.

MAFF Senior officials convened consultation processes with national NGO partners for identifying best SLM practices in five themes. MAFF technical officers as well as a technical team from MOE led

studies on best practices and results were endorsed by respective Agency heads. MAFF also convened 3 annual SLM World Day Awareness events.

4. Sustainability

Policy dialogue: Key provisions of the NAP are already incorporated in the NDSP. Selected Key projects proposed in the NAP are also proposed in the Strategy for Agriculture and Water (SAW). These include proposals for updating information on lowland soils and generating information on upland soils.

The results of various studies supported by the project has been assembled and compiled and communicated to the TWG for the Preparation of the Agricultural Land Act through the DALRM and FAO. FAO Asia Pacific and FAO Cambodia have expressed interest for collaboration on NAP implementation especially in the arena of land degradation assessment. Initial discussion with the DANIDA on the other hand indicates possible collaboration to support agroforestry promotion.

Technical Approach: The investment program of NAP has adopted the watershed approach to SLM. Under this scheme, both small farmers and big agribusiness operators will be involved. At the same time, forest rehabilitation strategies will be located in critical zones of the watershed where they will have the most effective impacts on agricultural landscapes.

The watershed approach to be used will build on the lessons learned of initial watershed work in 3 provinces. It takes note of the weakness of previous techno-centric approaches (rely mainly on physical technologies) and will highlight combined use of science and improved governance.

Post Project Capacity Building: Under the proposed organizational set up of the NAP, a technical working group composed of key representatives from MAFF, MOWAR, MOE and other key agencies will be formed to serve as coordination mechanism. The TWG will work closely with the TWG for Agriculture and Water. The MAFF has assigned the MAFF Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management or DALRM as the focal point for the planning and coordination of the NAP within MAFF.

Project prepared the TNA and schematic designs of SLM training topics that can also be used even after the Project period. The TNA served as basis for implementing the various training sessions. Preliminary results of a post training survey indicate that several training participants have used the gained knowledge to improve their SLM planning skills and ability to share technical information on SLM.

A more detailed TNA was also prepared for the DALRM. The TNA can be used as basis for dialogue with potential partners who can help finance specific courses or provide technical expertise for training needs.

Discussions with the World Agro-forestry Center was also initiated to jumpstart a review of existing agro forestry practices and link Cambodian Technical organizations with the Southeast Asia Agro-forestry Education Network (SEANAFE). Discussions are underway between MAFF and FAO to study the feasibility of conducting a more updated land degradation assessment. In fact the DALRM head attended an FAO sponsored seminar in Beijing for this purpose. Initial links were established between the MAFF's Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management (DALRM) the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). The DALRM Director will attend a WOCAT conference in June 2011 on the sharing of best practices in SLM.

Funding: Six priority project concepts have been prepared and shared with potential funders. The GEF 5 has provided USD 1.2 Million Allocation for Land Degradation in Cambodia. The UNCCD Focal Person attended a GEF orientation workshop for fund utilization. The MAFF through the SLM project has begun discussions with FAO on how to work together to avail of these funds. The Global Mechanism (GM) is helping in the dialogue with Country based donors. Project physical resources (computers and other office equipment) will be turned over to MAFF offices that implement the NAP.

Management effectiveness review

1. Quality of monitoring

Until February 2009, the log frame of the Project Inception Report was used as basis for planning and monitoring. Due to changes in project strategy agreed with the GM in Feb 2009, a new log frame was developed and adopted in the later part of 2009. Annual work plans guided project operations.

Quarterly reports and next quarter plans were prepared based on the results of various studies and actions by TA and personnel. UNDP approved annual and quarterly plans endorsed by the PMB as basis for fund releases. A project implementation report was submitted to GEF in mid 2009.

M & E activities were implemented by the National Project Manager and PTC, based on work plans and terms of references of consultants. TORS for consultants were supplemented by planning guides in some cases. An example is the documentation guide for best practices in SLM.

Monitoring of NAP progress was directly undertaken by the TRT itself with the support of the NPM. . Monitoring of best activities under the capacity building component was done by the SLM Team directly. Enforcement of guidelines for the implantation of BP suffered a setback when 3 of the 5 the study teams did not fully follow the guidelines for the identification and documentation process. This occurred at a time during the long period where there was severe shortage of Project Personnel while a new Project Manager was being recruited.

The ITA provided quality assurance support to the preparation of the NAP, preparation of thematic maps, conduct of best practices and other SLM related studies. Quality assurance for the conduct of technical studies started with the consensus with key stakeholders on the objectives and TOR. Implementers of studies were provided regular orientation at the start and feed backing during implementation. During missions to Cambodia, the ITA was able to follow up quality assurance personally with personnel concerned. In between missions this was done through email or occasionally through skype.

In between PMB meetings, UNDP called technical progress meetings among SLM TA personnel to assess progress and plan for next technical steps. The NPM provided regular updates of progress to the NPD and the Deputy NPD. The Deputy NPD played an important role in analyzing the real issues on the ground and in connecting project personnel with the MAFF senior leadership.

Two project retreats were conducted in 2010 to conduct self assessment, revise strategies and develop mitigation strategies to address risks and issues.

2. Timely delivery of outputs

While the project officially started in April 2008, full blown operations started only in Feb 2009 when the ITA and the PTC were on board. All project plans were thus adjusted to be covered in the remaining period of 2 years and 3 months (Jan 2009 to Mar 2011) .However plans within this same adjusted period were also not accomplished on time. The NAP was finished the 1st quarter of 2011 while the Best Practices initiative was only substantially finished in December 2010. The basic reasons as explained in the section on risks and issues was the major staff turnover (transition from one NPM to another) and delays in the deployment of TA.

3. Resources allocation

Of the total budget of USD 1,053,447.32, a total USD 970,115.49 or 92% was disbursed. The project was designed for joint funding by the GEF and, UNDP and MAFF (in kind costs such as office space and other key utilities). Of the total amount disbursed, USD 267,368.70 or 27% were used to

supported project costs. The rest (USD 702,745.79) or 73% of the total expenses was used for development costs

The UNCCD based Global Mechanism or GM directly supported several activities related to NAP preparation

4. Cost-effective use of inputs

There are two points of view relevant to cost effectiveness. The external evaluation indicated. The cost of the project appears to be excessive given that many of the planned outputs were dropped and the measurable results of activities, although significant in launching SLM and producing a NAP, were still relatively limited. The need for extensive orientation and awareness raising for SLM, the project delays, the effort required to re-do early low quality outputs, and the relatively high cost of project management may explain some of the cost-ineffectiveness questions for a project that was reduced in scope.

From a long term perspective, however, the inputs supported by the budget generated the NAP that serves as the major policy instrument to guide future programs of the RGC as well as donor portfolios enhance SLM over the next 10 year period. The MAFF programs will in turn guide local authorities to allocate local resources to the commune. Without this guidance from NAP, programs and projects will not be harmonized and the possibility of duplication of investments will be high, while impacts will not be optimal.

Key technical provisions for the NAP have been successfully incorporated in the NSDP which guides investment programs of the whole government. Thus the fund generation potential of the SLM Project and the NAP it produced is very high. Further, based on the NAP, 6 concept notes for priority projects have been prepared for consideration under the GEF 5 funding for SLM worth USD 1.2 M.

In order to generate a NAP that can provide such guidance, it has to be supported by information sets. These information sets were generated by the various studies under the Project.

Inputs for NAP preparation at the latter stage, took advantage of resident resource persons within MAFF. This saved a certain portion of TA costs and helped improve the project efficiency. Capacity building efforts have helped strengthen key officials and key technical officers with MAFF. The cost for the capacity building component is the highest. It should be noted that this component included non training activities such as technical studies on best practices etc. These studies were in fact used more for the NAP

Existing working groups Networks established such as the TRT, NAP sub committee to oversee the project and lead in project implementation with participation by other Departments save not only the cost but also the time on identification, engagement of external consultants outside of MAFF.

III. Project results summary

3.1. Project Output 1: NAP completed, adopted, disseminated and future SLM projects in NAP under consideration by donors

3.1.1. Key Results:

a) Completed NAP (Khmer and English) endorsed by the TRT to the MAFF Minister. .

NAP consists of two parts. Part 1 is the Situation Analysis and includes discussion on the results of several studies:

- The nature and extent of land degradation based on available satellite imagery, literature, thematic mapping and supplemental field research and consultations.
- A preliminary discussion on the economic values of natural resources

- Previous and ongoing programs and emerging best practices in SLM.
- The Policy, legal and coordination framework that promote or constrain the practice of SLM
- Financing trends and described the tree sources of funding: internal (government), donor and innovative financing (e.g. PES, REDD, etc.)

Part 2 is the Investment Plan itself. The overall goal of the NAP is to "support the national agricultural productivity and rural poverty alleviation targets through the widespread adoption of sustainable land management practices and improved adaptation to climate change in the agriculture sector". It is a ten year program with the following components

- Program 1: Promotion of Soil Management and Climate Adaptation Practices
- Program 2 Multi- Sectoral watershed-based Forest restoration to support agriculture
- Program 3 Policy Support to incorporation of SLM in land use management
- Program 4 Human Capacity Development
- Program 5 Resource Mobilization to support priority actions

b) Six concept notes developed and discussed with potential donors. The Project prepared six concepts as basis for dialogue with potential co – investors. These were based on priorities set by MAFF from among 30 projects identified in the NAP investment program. The topics of concept papers and the donor partners that the project approached to discuss the topics include:

| Topics for Concept Notes | Potential Donor partners | Actions taken |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Follow up Agricultural Land Degradation Assessment | FAO Technical Cooperation Facility | Discussed with FAO Bangkok and Cambodia |
| Addressing Problem Soils | GEF 5 with FAO , IFAD | same |
| *Agro-forestry Promotion | DANIDA support to NFP | Discussed with FA as part of DANIDA – FA NFP action |
| Forest regeneration through the Watershed approach | DANIDA support to NFP | No action yet |
| Communication Strategy | UNDP Track Funds or GM | Discussed with UNDP |
| Prek Thnot Watershed – | GEF 5 with FAO | Discussed with FAO |

Process of NAP preparation

Guidance and quality assurance The MAFF -based technical review team or TRT provided close technical oversight of the NAP preparation process. This involved regular technical sessions with the SLM Project TA to set directions for accurate data collection and analysis; review of particular chapters of the NAP and translation of the same into official Khmer. Data on land and water was verified with key line agencies such as the MOWRAM and MOE. The TRT also ensured the highest standards in translation (particularly from English to Khmer). The consultation started with small group interactions with various stakeholders and concluded with 2 national workshops.

The NAP is supported by the results of at least 6 studies conducted by the SLM Project. The topics of these studies are: land degradation; thematic mapping; economic value of natural resources; TNA, best practices, gender study and integrated financing strategy. MAFF technical officials were involved in implementing the studies.

The Global Mechanism oriented the RGC on the most recent UNCCD protocols for preparing the NAP. The Project Technical Advisor provided guidance to the SLM project Team and specifically the NAP National Consultant on approaches and methods for preparing specific sections of NAP. **Manpower** The preparation of the NAP was led by the MAFF through a Technical Review Team (TRT). The TRT was chaired by the Secretary of State. The members included the UNCCD Focal Person, and key Department heads. The TRT was assisted by the SLM project team. A national

Consultant was engaged in Sept 2009 to prepare the draft content of the NAP. GM provided specific guidance for preparing Chapter 5 (Financing Situation and Options). The ITA provided direct assistance in fine tuning and enriching the technical content of Part 1. Based on the planning workshop in Dec 2010, the ITA prepared the write-up for the NAP Investment program as basis for decision making by the TRT.

Constraining and enabling factors: In the original project design, the NAP was supposed to be finished by the end of the first year (2008). In actuality, it was completed only in the 1st quarter of 2011. As advised by GM in Feb 2009, the NAP preparation would actually need at least a year and a half to prepare instead of just 9 months as originally designed. Manpower issues related to TA hiring policies and process and Senior Staff turnover exacerbated the challenge. Translation from Khmer to English and vice versa took time due to highly technical nature of the topic which required direct intervention in translation by the TRT.

In terms of enabling factors, the various studies undertaken by the SLM Project under the Capacity Building component provided materials for the content of NAP. The TRT decided to take a very proactive stance towards the 2nd half of 2010 due to the project deadlines set by the MAFF Minister. The GM provided extra financing to extend the IFS team to help in final NAP preparation. The SLM team and ITA worked double time in the final quarter of the project.

Output 2: Enhanced capacity for SLM

3.2.1. Enhance capacity of key staff at national and local level

Key Results

- a) TNA and Training Plan for the SLM Project. This guided the conduct of various training sessions. The same will be used as a preliminary basis for the human resources capacity component of the NAP. Figure 1 provides a summary of the TNA and the courses proposed under the Training Plan.
- b) Conduct of orientation and training courses and other learning events. The Project conducted a total of 74 training and awareness building events benefiting a total of 2,404 participants (444 females). Part of this figure would be the small number of participants who benefited from 19 critical training courses and selected technical planning workshops. Annex B provides a summary of planned and actual training provided. (both formal training and technical planning workshops that served as learning events).
- c) Specific TNA for DALRM and training design for the first course on soil conservation and soil fertility management. The TNA will be used for future interaction with other partners/funders of DALRM in the near future. A general training session was designed which would provide the first major refresher course on soil conservation and soil fertility management.
- d) Conduct of a cross visit by 2 MAFF officials to the Philippine Bureau of Soils on the governance of a national soils service program. The project also facilitated training support to the DALRM Director from FAO (land degradation assessment) and WOCAT (sharing of SLM best practices).
- e) Round Table Discussion on Agro-forestry and subsequent inclusion of Agro-forestry in the NAP and programs of the NFP. The Project worked with ICRAF in identifying the prospects for inclusion of a major agro-forestry program in the NAP as well as in the NFP. This event is reported online by ICRAF in its website for SEANAFPE :
<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/sea/Default.aspx?alias=www.worldagroforestry.org/sea/Seanafe>.

Processes in enhancing capacity

Guidance and quality assurance: The Project prepared a TNA and on this basis, a Training Program that would support capacity enhancement of key personnel of MAFF and other RGC agencies who are involved in SLM, particularly in implementing the NAP. This considered the results of the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) as well as the GEF Capacity Building Framework. Capable resource persons from Government and non government institutions were tapped for this purpose.

Ownership The TNA and training plan has served as basis for the conduct of several training sessions where MAFF technical experts also served as resource persons for other MAFF staff. In the case of the TNA for the DALRM, this was personally presided by the Director of DALRM in Nov 2010. The TNA will serve as basis for future dialogue between MAFF DALRM and technical partners to support capacity building of the DALRM.

In Dec 2009, the Project collaborated with the RUA and the World Agro-forestry Center to conduct a round table discussion among MAFF, RUA and NGOs on the prospects of agro forestry. This process was deemed a key first step in identifying interventions including training that would build capacity for planning and implementing agro forestry projects. Upon request of the Sec of State, a report was prepared for the Minister of MAFF. The FA requested the Project to contribute to training program on Agro-forestry as part of pilot in collaboration with the DANIDA. The project addressed this need in Dec 2010.

Constraining and enabling factors. Only Sixty five % of the categories of training modules were implemented during the Project period. The basic reason was major manpower gap during the staff turnover. However, the most the key technical and programmatic topics were implemented. In the case of the training for DALRM, competing priorities of the DALRM resulted in a delay in the start of the TNA and training design for the specific DALRM training course and lack of time to identify qualified resources persons.

There was lack of documentation of the early impacts of the training. However the preliminary results of a rapid, post- post survey among selected training participants indicated that key technical officers have used the trainings for their planning related functions. Others have become resident trainers for MAFF programs on SLM.

The interest of international organizations to support national initiatives proved helpful to jumpstart dialogue on new topics. The World Agro-forestry center for instance helped catalyze interest in the topic on agro forestry. The FAO LADA program introduced the prospects of more data based land degradation assessment.

3. 2.2 incorporate SLM in community learning network

Key Results

Consensus on the amendments to be made on the current AEA methodology to better incorporate SLM concerns and in SLM in 57 communes in 3P provinces assisted by IFAD: The AEA method now includes additional aspects on land degradation and soil analysis and sustainable land management.

Process in Community learning networks

The Project collaborated with the Dept of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to identify ways on how to incorporate SLM concerns in the MAFF's regular AEA process. AEA is the agro ecosystems analysis tool used by the extension service to determine the priority agricultural issues and opportunities of the commune from an agro ecological perspective and thereby guide commune level agricultural planning. The project team built on experience of MAFF in the AEA systems and interacted with key resource persons from the World Fish Center. The SLM Project through the ITA also helped the IFAD RULIP project fine-tune the draft guidelines for Community Learning Networks.

3.2.3 Document and disseminate best practices for SLM

Key results

- a) A technical report (English) and a synthesis report (Khmer) appearing in the MAFF magazine and UNDP website discusses the 100 Best Practices identified under 5 themes: :Sustainable agriculture (SA); Community forestry(CF); Community fisheries(CFi);Community protected areas (CPA);and SLM oriented initiatives of Local authorities. The best practices in SLM as part of the NAP situation analysis and basis for Investment Programming.
- b) Five Thematic Articles representing the 5 best practice themes appear in the UNDP website. Each of the thematic articles describes the issues under the theme, summarizes 20 best practices, discusses policy implications and provides information on references used.
- c) Twenty one field validation reports (English and Khmer) of best practices in 5 themes .(5 in each of Agriculture , CF, CFi, and CPA and 1 in Local Authority) . Except for the BP on local authority, these reports were likewise endorsed by respective Agency /Departments.

- d) Cambodia specific guide for the identification and documentation of Best Practices (adapted from UNCCD and WOCAT) and potentially applicable for subsequent programs to identify and document more best practices

Process in Best Practices documentation and dissemination

Guidance and quality assurance: The project customized guidelines based on global guidance from UNCCD and WOCAT (global online platform on SLM Best practices). The first four themes (SA, CF, CFi, and CPA) represented practices in various landscapes where SLM is needed and can happen. Examples are community-based approaches that represent a low cost, socially desirable strategy to implement sustainable land management. The 5th theme is about Local Governments that support local SLM.

Ownership and Communication MAFF in consultation with various sectors (especially NGO partners) identified an initial twenty BP for each of the five themes or a total of one hundred BPs. From each of the 20 Best practices identified for each theme, 5 were further studied and validated through field check and interaction with farmers and communities who were involved in the practice. Each of the detailed studies done by resource persons from key MAFF Departments (CARDI, CFi, CPA, CF). The overall consultation processes were convened by Senior MAFF officials. Criteria for identifying the twenty included relevance to the key issues; the practice has been proven effective by different people for several years; and the tendency of spread of the practice.

Constraining and enabling factors The Best Practices activity started and was completed late due to the long period needed to recruit consultants interested to do the study. Two of the 5 study teams (CF and CPA) also did not fully follow the guide for documentation and thus their outputs required time for review by the SLM team .Due to the unexpected lack of funds in 2010, the dissemination process for the Best Practices has just started. The participation of NGOS in identification of 100 best practices was highly valued by the Project.

3.2.4. Assess gender role in SLM and incorporate findings in local extension programs

Key Results Report on the Gender in SLM study .The findings indicate that women headed households comprise 56% of subsistence farmers while 54 % of workers in market-oriented agriculture are women. Women are known to contribute to SLM. Women's contributions are constrained by a combination of cultural, institutional and policy related concerns. Limited access to education and extension and land administration services, low confidence and the traditional dominant roles of men in financial decision making have been contribute to this situation.

There is a gradual increase in the number of women in the local decision making committees of CF and CPA programs. Several of "good practices in community forestry" that are being documented involve women groups. Women's contributions are constrained by a combination of cultural, institutional and policy related concerns. Support programs of line agencies need to be updated to incorporate new insights about women role in agriculture and environment.

Under the training activities 16% of total beneficiaries were women. This needs to be addressed better in future SLM initiatives

Processes in the Gender study

Guidance and quality assurance: A resource person was engaged to do the study based on initial discussion with MAFF GMAG and technical adviser of resources persons from UNICEF the resource person was directly involved in setting up the Gender programs for MAFF, MOE, and D& D among others. The study involved a study of representative sites in Kampong Speu and Preah Vihear.

The results have been communicated factored in the NAP with as input to the updating Gender mainstreaming program within the MAFF. A particular activity under NAP involves the development of training and communication modules that would highlight the key role of women in SLM particularly in the promotion of community learning networks.

Constraining/enabling factors: The study was cut in 2010 due to fund constraints. Action planning within MAFF remains unaccomplished. However, some preliminary consensus was reached on key areas of concern that would be addressed by the GMAG. One of these was the need to update training modules that discuss the role of women in agriculture and SLM.

3.2.5 Develop Landscape land use map for cardamom and recommend institutional framework for implementation

Key Results

- Results of the study on economic value of natural resources in Cardamom areas. This has been incorporated as a Chapter within the NAP portion on situation analysis and used to help highlight the need to better manage the countries natural landscapes such as watersheds as well as soil resources. .
- a proposal for the harmonization of plans for the Prek Thnout Watershed (in Cardamomom) to support agriculture in Kampong Speu,

Process in Cardamom land use

The Project collaborated with the Global Mechanism and consulted with key Government and NGO stakeholders in Cardamom to conduct as study on the economic values of natural resources in the Cardamom area. Available data earlier assembles by FA, MOE and NGOs working the area (CI and FFI, among others) were utilized by the study and triangulated with selected primary data from the field .This would be a contribution to the development of the NAP program as well as for the further development of long term plans in the Cardamom.

Part of the NAP preparation included the development of a proposal for a landscape based SLM program in a particular watershed served by the Cardamom range. This would be the Prek Thnout Watershed. The proposal was prepared in consultation with key stakeholders in the Province of Kampong Speu where majority of the watershed is located. Previous, ongoing and planned investments involving SLM were mapped by an SLM study team in collaboration with Provincial planning officials. The resulting proposal involves a harmonized set of investments in critical zones of the watershed designed to restore the flow of the watershed's ecological services to the agriculture sector of the province. The list of investments will then guide the local authorities and national government agencies concerned in their respective agency plans.

3.3. Output 3: SLM integrated into central strategies (and regulatory framework) as well as local development planning guidelines

3.3.1 Incorporate SLM into NSDP

Key results:

- a) THE NAP has been incorporated in certain sections of the NSDP for 2010 to 2015. The specific section of NSDP 2009 – 2013 reads as follows:

"B. Planned Actions to Implement the Prioritized Policies

401. To implement RGC's priority policies for the Fourth Legislature, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) will continue its work on updating the Agriculture Sector Strategy and seeking support to implement the strategy through a sector-wide programme. In terms of specific actions, it will:

- Improve soil fertility, conduct soil classification for crop zoning, and formulate land use plan;
 - Implement the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat land degradation and desertification in Cambodia (page 122)

 - Further implement the National Action Programme (NAP) in relation to the mainstreaming and raising of awareness of gender issues in agriculture sector;(p 123)
 - Examine the long-term trends of soil fertility for rice production using organic fertilizers in the rain-fed lowland sandy soils;
 - Increase soil productivity in lowland areas for rice production with economic and environmental sustainability;
 - Increase soil productivity in upland areas for upland crop production with economic and environmental sustainability"
- b) Assistance provided to the TWG & E formulates its log frame for 2011 – 2015 by suggesting specific inputs related to SLM in the TWG log frame.
- c) Compilation of SLM project results relayed to the TWG for Agricultural Land Law

Process in mainstreaming to NSDP

Guidance and quality Assurance: The project regularly interacted with the Secretary of TWG for Agriculture and Water to ensure consistency of NAP content to the SAW. The Secretary was also a member of the NAP TRT and was therefore regularly updated of the issues and opportunities in SLM discussed under the NAP. The Project also participated in the preparation of the Updated Strategy for Agriculture and Water for 2011 to 2015. The Project suggested 3 key items for inclusion in the SAW. The preparation and implementation of the NAP is part of the SAW as well as the NSDP

The Project interacted with the DALRM and the FAO to identify how the SLM Project can contribute to the formulation of the Agricultural Land Law Act. It was agreed that the results of the SLM Project studies would be packaged and communicated with to the TWG and the TA to be engaged by the FAO to support the TWG. The SLM Project through its SLM ITA also assisted in the identification of suitable candidates for the ITA for the Agricultural Land Law.

Constraining/ enabling factors: The enabling factor is that Planning Dept and secretariat of the TWG for agriculture and Water are organic members of the NAP TRT. Thus they are familiar with the issues and advocacies raised by f NAP. The constraining factor was the lack of time to devote attention to this due to limited manpower and huge requirements of NAP preparation.

3.3.2 Incorporate SLM into local authority planning

Results:

- a) Benchmark study of the trends of investments of commune covering the period. The results were factored in the IFS.
- b) Conduct of 3 orientation workshops for local planning facilitators nationwide as well as representative commune communes in PVH and KPS.

Process in mainstreaming to local authorities

The Project interacted with NCDDS and the UNDP Governance Programs (PSDD and Provincial SPAA) to understand the needs of local authorities in planning and implementing SLM programs. Based on this the Project conducted orientation sessions to local authorities in Preah Vihea, Kampong Speu and Takeo prior to the planning period of 2009.

Constraining and enabling factors. The planned follow up work after the orientation workshop for communes did not materialize due to a project management decision to focus activities in 2010 on NAP completion. The enabling factors for whatever modest accomplishment of this target, has been the contribution of the SPAA of the PSSDD.

3.3.3 Mobilize resources for implementation of priority NAP components

Results:

- a) IFS study results – The study indicated 3 sources of financing : internal (national budgets) , external(donors) and innovative financing (e.g. PES). Prospects for tapping them were identified. Each of the programs of NAP were analyzed the mode of financing for each was identified (any of the 3 modalities above)
- b) 6 concept notes prepared and discussed with potential donor partners (see also discussion under the NAP)
- c) SLM National Events and information materials developed and disseminated
 - (2) Annual World Day Events To Combat Land Degradation
 - (4) SLM posters; (1) SLM Video
 - (1) CD on relevant SLM articles and (1) CD on results to SLM Studies
 - (1) Article in MAFF magazine and (6) Articles uploaded in the UNDP website
 - 4) Best Practice publication such as CF, CFi, Agriculture, and CPA
 - (1) Draft Final draft of National Action Program

Process in resource mobilization

Using technical guidance and financial support from GM, the Project conducted an integrated financing study to determine the actual and potential source of financing for the NAP. The project also researched on the funding prospects under GEF 5 and FAO and submitted a report to the MAFF leadership on options to take.

Constraining/enabling factors: The project planned to develop a communication plan to guide the targeting and schedule of materials to be developed. The plan would have involved 2 phases – during NAP preparation and dissemination of the approved NAP. Research of knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) was started together with PTT members in the 1st quarter of 2010. Unfortunately the Communications consultant resigned in midstream due to medical reasons of his spouse. Thus the communication planning was left unfinished and materials have been developed on an ad hoc basis.

IV. Implementation challenges

Project risks:

The following risks and issues were raised during the past 3 years or reporting.

Risk #1: In the early part of the project, lack of political support and lack of donor interests were perceived a risk as the topic of land degradation especially in agricultural lands was not perceived to be an urgent one compared to that of forest loss and climate change (covered by other UN conventions) **Action Taken:** The risk was reduced. This risk resolved by itself when the Technical Review Team under direct order from the Minister proceeded to give it priority attention to guide the development of the Agriculture Land Act. The Secretary of the TWG for Agriculture and Water was made a member of the TRT for NAP. Through the Secretariat, SLM concerns were incorporated in the NSDP for 2010 to 2015. Consultative workshops were conducted with peer Ministries as well as the secretariat of the Council of Ministers to ensure that the NAP was harmonized with overall programs.

Risk #2: When the RGC decided to install measures to rationalize the compensation and incentive system, the salary supplement to PTT members were stopped. Members of the TRT were also affected. This became a major disincentive for many donor assisted project including the SLM Project. Except for one member all the PTTT members stopped reporting to the SLM project. **Action taken:** The risk remains and continues to threaten other future projects.

Risk 3: Climate for Inter agency collaboration - There was limited interaction time between MAFF and other agencies in the preparation of the NAP until the formal consultation period. As a result there was limited exchange of information and data that was important for NAP. Accordingly this was a reflection of the existing climate of lack of collaboration among agencies. For instance, MAFF was asked to pay for certain data that had been obtained from a sister agency. **Actions taken:** The risk has been reduced. NAP TA found ways to overcome constraints on data availability but this somehow contributed to the extended period to prepare the NAP. Additional consultative workshops were conducted with peer Ministries.

Project Issues:

Issue 1: Project Management in early years: The project management style in the first two years (April 2008 to December 2009) did not exactly match UNDP expectations. This was exacerbated by the big 6 month management gap in the first half of 2010 while a new Project manager was recruited. The resulting 2 year gap in manpower (50% of project period) severely affected project operations.

Action taken: Issue is dead. An OIC was installed in the first half of 2010. A new Project Manager was installed in the middle of 2010. Monthly meetings with UNDP were conducted to monitor the situation and implement coping actions.

Issue 2: TA manpower Issues revolving on the TA cycles of TOR preparation, recruitment and management of Technical Assistance also affected project operations:

- There were different perceptions on the nature and scope of manpower needed for preparing the NAP (choice between a team of short term TA or one main consultant). Also, MAFF preferred that its in-house experts are engaged as the TA. UNDP recognized this expertise but could not use its funds for hiring government personnel as TA. UNDP hesitated to hire short term independent consultants due to the very long hiring periods involved. Thus the full TA complement for NAP preparation was not adequately achieved.
- While the recruitment followed standard protocols for timeliness, it actually took also a very long time to identify the National consultant for NAP (4 months) as well as resource persons for best practices (6 months).
- TA Quality Assurance - Absence of a Project Manager for a long period (1st half of 2010) meant lesser level of enforcement of quality standards in monitoring the TA. There was also

an unclear technical accountability relationship between the ITA and NAP National consultant's. The ITA did not have operational control of national TA. Being only intermittently present (part time) did not help. National consultants were free to follow or not recommendations of the ITA but there was limited mechanism to resolve situations where non observance of recommendations jeopardized the quality of TA outputs. Examples were the case TA inputs on the NAP and on 2 of the 5 best practice study teams.

Action taken: The issue is dead. The new NPM hired 5 months after was given orientation to be able to catch up quickly. The Project Tech Coordinator provided management back up to the National Project Manager. The ITA exercised extra effort to provide guidance and reminders to TA. UNDP was closely involved in resolving the issues. GM provided back up Technical assistance.

Issue 3: Matching of PTT skills with Project Needs: The Project Technical Team was supposed to be the inter-phase between the Project and the MAFF and support NAP preparation. It also represented the sustainability side of the Project (strengthening of regular personnel). However, only between 3 to 4 of 50% of the 8 members, PTT were regularly active. One big reason was the mismatch between actual capacity (e.g. more on extension campaigns) and those of project needs (mostly planning and analysis work). This was further exacerbated by the withdrawal of salary allowance as part of a RGC rationalization program and the subsequent loss of motivation for most members.

Action taken: The issue is dead. The Project provided intensive training inputs in 2009 but with the decline in attendance of most in 2010, the Project continued to work with at least two of the 8 members. The project also worked with MAFF staff other than PTT members.

Issue 4 TA Resources for NAP. The project's substantive actions especially for NAP did not start until 2009 (9 months beyond original plans) when the Project Tech Coordinator and International Tech Advisor were finally on board. Equally significant, the earlier project design allocated 6 months to complete the NAP which would not match the needs of the new UNCCD protocols.

Action taken: The issue is dead. GM in Feb 2009 advised that at least 15 months was needed to complete the NAP given the new protocols that the UNCCD just put in place. UNDP and MAFF agreed and the NAP followed a two years work plan which was also extended further. The project Board also decided to modify some project components: remove the project activity related to actual field extension work in 3 provinces; realign resources conduct more studies for NAP and allot more resources to document and disseminate best practices. This would allow limited project staff and financial resources to provide more attention to NAP preparation.

Issue 5 Overall Project financial resources. The issue is dead. In 2010, UNDP commitments for more funds were withdrawn and thus earlier plans based on these commitments, had to be downscaled. The project was then asked to focus resources on the development of the NAP. This affected the achievement of several targeted studies (e.g. agro-forestry, gender, communications etc) under the capacity building and mainstreaming components.

Action taken: Project staff provided additional voluntary services to complete the project. The Project was extended for 3 more months using unutilized funds to implement some of the key activities that were not conducted.

V. Lessons learnt and next steps

The following areas of lessons learned may be noted. Four lessons come from the External review (designated with an asterisk *) which in turn are derived from Annual Reports. There rest is lessons generated at the end of the Project.

- Manpower and Management :

- *There is a need to recognize the partnership aspects of SLM that require full engagement of all stakeholders, and in addition, early exposure of the project management to field conditions also helps to orient the project to real issues in the field.¹
- *Secondly, the critical role of human resources was highlighted in the project implementation, particularly the need to address the manpower requirements for NAP preparation, to have a fully operational PTT (only part of the PTT was actively engaged), and to resolve accountability and roles of the international technical advisor and the national advisor.² Also, the hiring of external consultants without strong links to government, the management difficulties in enforcing quality standards and the lack of sufficient incentives to fully involve government experts created significant constraints for project implementation.³
- Following regular procedures and timeline for recruiting TA may not be sufficient. This is because of the competitive market for expertise given the growth of development projects in Cambodia. Extra ordinary efforts may be needed to ensure timely availability of TA especially for knowledge intensive projects such as the SLM.
- Unclear mechanisms for enforcing recommendations of the senior ITA to ensure quality assurance of outputs of national TA could affect the quality and timeliness of TA outputs.
- Careful attention should be given in the choice of regular staff to be part of the Project Tech team (PTT) to ensure a match between TOR and qualifications. The TOR should be explained very well first and take sufficient time to allow proper identification and selection.
- There is expertise within RGC that can be tapped for NAP preparation. MAFF has also committed to provide this expertise. However, without appropriate incentive systems, there is difficulty in accessing this expertise notwithstanding government commitments to provide this expertise. This is complicated by the fact that hiring expertise external to MAFF without first tapping resident expertise creates tension within the project and affects smooth implementation.
- The role of the UNCCD focal person is pivotal to the success of NAP preparation. The participation of the Planning Dept is vital to ensure that NAP is mainstreamed in policies.
- GM involvement in providing regular and more timely technical feedback can be helpful for the quality of NAP.

Project Design and Future designs

- *The SLMP experience demonstrates the importance of both communication and having a clear concept of the project strategy and expected results. There is insufficient time in a medium size project to accommodate any uncertainty in the measurable results expected from the project. This also means having an effective, feasible monitoring program that tracks progress during the implementation and that triggers intervention where they may be required.
- *It is apparent that SLM is a new concept in Cambodia that will take time and experience to become established. The expected results from SLMP within a three year time frame may have been too ambitious. Realistic expectations should drive future project designs. The SLM program will need to be much more strategic, simple and issue/ground-oriented than has been the case in SLMP if it is to be effective in the next few years.

¹ Paraphrased from SLM Project Annual Project Report for 2008, p.2.

² Paraphrased from SLM Project Annual Project Report for 2010, p11.

³ UNDP, Draft Project Completion Report, April 21, 2011, p. 19.

- The direct and continuing involvement of the UNDP in project management is vital even if this NEX project. This is because of the technical experience of UNDP in developing planning documents linked to international commitments
- NAP preparation requires at least two years given the new protocols of UNCCD and the capacity building requirements needed for ample inputs from the lead agency

Recommendations

The recommendations combine those of the external review (designated by an *) as well as those identified by the staff at the end of the project.

Future GEF and UNDP Projects

- Future GEF projects and the related project design and operational guidelines, should recognize the implementation difficulties of the SLM project and give particular attention to: (a) commitment and leadership from senior government officials, (b) a well-defined and accepted project inception strategy to guide implementation, (c) recruitment of qualified and experienced project management staff with probation conditions for the inception period, and (d) an adequate set of incentives to ensure government staff participation** .
- Review the practicality of NEX mode of project Implementation for projects involving preparation of plans linked to international conventions (NAP for UNCCD). These planning exercises are knowledge intensive efforts and require substantive and timely supply of TA over very short planning periods. A technical assistance team with strong accountability of consultants to the host Ministry and UNDP would be essential.
- Future review of UNDP TA recruitment policies need to factor in the growing number of technical expertise in RGC agencies (several with overseas graduate degrees). In fact, the quality of consultants from the private/ non government sector are not a guarantee that they are better. There is also need to recognize that hiring external consultants creates tension (and demoralization) among resident experts in the RGC. It is true that project documents normally commit this expertise as counterpart to Grant Funds. In reality low salary scales in Cambodia create an environment whereby it is difficult to actually secure that expertise. An incentive system that would enable future projects to fully tap and compensate resident expertise while at the same time acceptable to UNDP hiring policies are needed.
- Future NAP preparation projects should give at least two years for actual preparation due to the new UNCCD requirements

Future Steps for SLM in Cambodia

- MAFF should provide clear direction for follow-up SLM implementation activities through cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial mechanisms such as the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water that have the potential to provide greater impact on national SLM.
- Given the cross-sector linkages between SLM and climate change adaptation and resilience, UNDP should facilitate the integration of SLM Best Practices into the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance activities.
- The immediate step after NAP approval is the preparation of an effective communication strategy.
- MAFF and UNDP need to work together to sustain the momentum of the dialogue by mobilizing resources (small grants , TA etc) that can support small pilots on the ground while larger funding is being negotiated..

Project Extension (May to Aug 2011)

To set the stage for implementing the above recommendations, the Project will be extended for 3 months from May to August 2011. MAFF and UNDP will collaborate with GLM to undertake measures to consolidated gains achieved under the project so far. The following key outputs are targeted:

- Final consultation processes with key sectors such as farmer groups , NGOs, business and the donor community
- Preparation of Integrated Investment Framework (IIF) for SLM
- Submission of the NAP to the MAFF leadership and Council of Ministers and preparation of dissemination plan
- Completion of Publications on overview of SLM challenges and opportunities and best practices in SLM
- The four sets of SLM best practices should be further refined and validated by SLM practitioners in Cambodia prior to publication and dissemination, along with completion of the Communications Plan.
- Preparation of guide for SLM in AEA based on experience in the field. Due to its outreach capability, the Agro-Ecosystem Analysis process within the MAFF agricultural extension program should be the lead mechanism to advance SLM in the short term. The protocol and program for SLM integration into AEA should be finalized before project closure.
- Conduct of an SLM forum where challenges , opportunities and next steps will be discussed as platform for the preparation of the next program Preparation of a unified concept proposal for consideration under GEF 5 and complementary funding

V. Financial Status and Utilization

Table 1: Contribution Overview [Project started: 19 July 2005 – Project end: 31 December 2011]

| Donor Name | Contributions | | Actual Expense | Balance |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Committed | Received | | |
| UNDP (04000 - TRAC) | 497,463.21 | 497,463.21 | 497,463.21 | - |
| GEF (62000 - GEF) | 598,000.00 | 595,160.14 | 595,160.14 | 2,839.86 |
| Total | 1,095,463.21 | 1,092,623.35 | 1,092,623.35 | 2,839.86 |

Table 2: Quarterly Cumulative Expenditure by Activities [01 January – 31 December 2011]

| Activities - Description | Budget [2011] | 2011 Cumulative Quarterly Expenditure | | | Balance | Delivery (%) |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Govt/SLM (Disbursed) | UNDP (Disbursed) | Total | | |
| Activity 1: PDF-A Exercise | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| Activity 2: NAP Completion, Validation and Dissemination | 51,642.24 | 30,658.17 | 20,984.07 | 51,642.24 | - | 100% |
| Activity 3: Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management | 65,222.19 | 8,548.00 | 56,674.19 | 65,222.19 | - | 100% |
| Activity 4: SLM Mainstreaming | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| Activity 5: Monitoring and Evaluation | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| Activity 6: Project Management | 59,050.80 | 21,309.79 | 37,741.01 | 59,050.80 | - | 100% |
| Total | 175,915.23 | 60,515.96 | 115,399.27 | 175,915.23 | - | 100% |

Table 3: Cumulative Expenditure by Activities [Project started: 19 July 2005 – Project end: 31 December 2011]

| Activities - Description | Total Budget [2005-2011] | Cumulative Expenditure | | | Balance | Delivery (%) |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|
| | | Govt/SLM (Disbursed) | UNDP (Disbursed) | Total | | |
| Activity 1: PDF-A Exercise | 33,748.74 | - | 33,748.74 | 33,748.74 | - | 100% |
| Activity 2: NAP Completion, Validation and Dissemination | 117,482.85 | 71,194.97 | 46,287.88 | 117,482.85 | - | 100% |
| Activity 3: Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management | 555,466.75 | 252,902.70 | 302,564.05 | 555,466.75 | - | 100% |
| Activity 4: SLM Mainstreaming | 76,940.85 | 70,977.53 | 5,963.32 | 76,940.85 | - | 100% |
| Activity 5: Monitoring and Evaluation | 9,524.51 | 303.30 | 9,221.21 | 9,524.51 | - | 100% |
| Activity 6: Project Management | 299,459.65 | 78,188.80 | 221,270.85 | 299,459.65 | - | 100% |
| Total | 1,092,623.35 | 473,567.30 | 619,056.05 | 1,092,623.35 | - | 100% |
| UNDP - 04000 | 497,463.21 | 212,590.20 | 284,873.01 | 497,463.21 | - | 100% |
| GEF - 62000 | 595,160.14 | 260,977.10 | 334,183.04 | 595,160.14 | - | 100% |
| TOTAL | 1,092,623.35 | 473,567.30 | 619,056.05 | 1,092,623.35 | - | 100% |

Annex 1 Stakeholder consultations conducted to support NAP preparation

| Topic | Profile of Stakeholders consulted | No of participant |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Consensus on the need for a NAP and initial inputs on key problems and institutional concerns | Representatives from various sectors done in collaboration with the UNCCD - Global Mechanism , Feb 2009 (Siem Reap) | 47 |
| Key land degradation problems at the farm level | Representative Farmers and extension personnel in 4 affected provinces (Kampong Cham, Svay Rieng , Takeo, and Battambang) Nov 2009 to March 2010 (Done in provincial capitals) | 93 |
| * Land degradation problems as perceived by local planning facilitators | Facilitators for commune investment planning June 2009 (Kampot) | ND |
| * Local capacity building needs | | |
| Land degradation problems as perceived by commune leaders | Commune leaders and planning facilitators 3rd quarter of 2009 (Preah Vihear, Kg. Speu) | ND |
| Consensus on official minimum documents to be used for situation analysis | Technical representatives from line ministries involved in SLM, Jan 2010 (Battambang) | 50 |
| Approach for identifying best practices | Representatives from line ministries June 2010 (Sihanoukville) | 20 |
| Best Practices in community based NRM | NGOs and MAFF technical Staff 3 workshops between Jan to June , 2010 (Phnom Penh) | 75 |
| Constraints and opportunities of women role in SLM | Women groups in a representative communes 4th quarter 2010 | ND |
| Potential for Agroforestry as a major NAP Strategy | Representatives from the Academe, NGO and MAFF in collaboration with ICRAF Nov 2009 (Phnom Penh) | 10 |
| Capacity Building Needs of key RGC Departments (MAFF, MOE) and Key potential partner agencies | Technical leaders of 8 Agencies /Depts. Departmental meetings between 2009 to 2010 | 15 |
| Land degradation problems around the Tonle Sap basin and initial ideas for the investment program | MAFF extension Personnel and NGOs working in provinces around Tonle Sap Lake July 2010(Battambang) | 65 |
| Feasibility of a Watershed approach for SLM through national – local and inter local collaboration | Provincial leaders and stakeholders in a representative province(Battambang), Jan 2010 | ND |
| NAP Launching workshop | Stakeholders who representatives of different line government agencies (MoE, MEF, WoWRAM, FiA, FA, CARDI and CMAC)- 29th Jan 2010 (Preah Sihanouk province) | 50 |
| Review NAP progress during SLM-Project retreat (initial discussion on the progresses) | NAP as part of 1st component of SLM-P has been raised to discuss and produce Road map for further development. Representatives are included Board members, NGOs and other stakeholders- 27-29 May 2010 (Takeo province) | 40 |
| Regional consultation for NAP preparation (Situation Analysis) | Stakeholder representatives around the Tonle Sap lake including NGOs and PDAs were attended. 26-29th July 2010 (Battambang province) | 46 |

Annex 2 Planned versus Actual Training Accomplishments (See also SLM Project TNA Part 1 , Section

| | Topic (from the TNA and Training Plan, revised Dec 09 , Table 5b) | Primary Participants | •Actual Number of Training & Planning Sessions** | Target Key Results at Project Level w/contributions from Training | Actual Results at Project Level |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1.0 | To support NAP preparation | | | | |
| 1.1 | Causes and effects of land degradation and emerging strategies (national) | PTT, Key MAFF Departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2 PTT Training sessions (PNH) •3 TRT Planning Sessions (PNH) •4 Provincial workshop-seminars with field visits under the Land Deg. Study | <p>NAP preparation process is science based, participatory and contains financial strategy. Correct definition of core problems serves as basis for formulation of relevant NAP technical and institutional strategies</p> | <p>*Rapid field appraisal of agricultural land degradation *12 Thematic maps on land degradation in Cambodia *NAP prepared following the 10 point UNCCD 10 year Strategy and based on at least 4 technical studies 2 financial /economic study consultation sessions</p> |
| 1.2 | Nature of NAP and process of preparation (multi-sectoral) | Key Departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Major National Conference Seminar w/GM (2009) for RGC and NGOs •3 TRT planning sessions (2009-2010) | | |
| 1.2.a | Orientation on NAP preparation for preparers | Specific preparers of sections of NAP | | | |
| 1.3 | Global best practices in SLM planning & implementation | TRT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *1 cross visit to the Phil – interaction with Soils Mgt Program leaders (April 2010) * Participation in WOCAT sharing conference negotiated (June 2011) | | |
| 1.4 | Resource mobilization for SLM | TRT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 TRT planning & review session on IFS (Q4, 2010) | Plans and programs incorporate more effective resource mobilization | The NAP includes a discussion of 3 financing modalities to reduce |

| | Topic (from the TNA and Training Plan, revised Dec 09 , Table 5b) | Primary Participants | •Actual Number of Training & Planning Sessions** | Target Key Results at Project Level w/contributions from Training | Actual Results at Project Level |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| | | | | plans | traditional reliance on donor funding. Investments included pilot on PES |
| 1.5 | GIS for decision- making in SLM | DALM, PTT | • GIS training course (2009- 2010) | Relevant maps or effective interpretation of existing maps to support decision making | Impact still being documented |
| 1.6 | Strategic planning | DALM | Not done | * Strategic Action Plan to operationalize SLM mandate of DALM | NA |
| 1.7 | Preparing proposals | Key Departments | Not done | Well prepared proposals prepared at the right time | NA |
| 2.0 | To support the Capacity Building Component | | | | |
| 2.1 | Incorporating SLM in AEA | PTT | •Practicum on AEA •2 Multi- agency review and planning sessions (SHV, 2009, 2010) | *Guide for SLM in AEA is pretested and endorsed for use | Gaps in current AEA identified and proposed SLM measures identified . This has not yet resulted into a guide |
| 2.2 | Overview of best practices for SLM4 | PTT, DAE | •2 Training sessions •3 Planning sessions to identify Best practices | A wide range of Best Practices are identified documented and disseminated | 100 Best practices in 5 Themes identified by MAFF and NGO partners |
| 2.3 | Documenting and communicating best practices | DAE, PTT | 1 Training Session 8 PTT members | | |
| 2.4 | Soil fertility improvement | DALM | * Cross visit to | | Results under |

⁴ These training topics have been partly implemented in the 1st half of 2009.

| | Topic (from the TNA and Training Plan, revised Dec 09 , Table 5b) | Primary Participants | •Actual Number of Training & Planning Sessions** | Target Key Results at Project Level w/contributions from Training | Actual Results at Project Level |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| 2.5 | Soil conservation and fertility improvement as part of extension packages | DAE | Philippines – interaction with Phil Soils Program leaders *TNA conducted on specific needs , course design based on office specific TNA completed but await implementation * Participation of one DALRM representative in FAO - LADA training was facilitated | Soil Fertility improvement and soil conservation strategies incorporated in DALM and Extension work programs | review |
| 2.6 | Soil survey and classification | DALM | Not done | | NA |
| 2.7 | Agro-forestry | CFO, RCPD | •1 review and planning session with ICRAF •Intro to Agroforestry – part of 1 day training session on agroforestry under DANIDA – FA Agroforestry program | Agroforestry strategies are considered for piloting in work programs of key agencies (DALM, DAE, FA and MOE units | Agroforestry is incorporated as a NAP technical strategy Results on FA under review |
| 2.8 | Building and sustaining user networks | CFO, RCPD | Not done | Incorporation of effective strategies in PDA and PFA work plans to promote SLM in CSO and community learning networks at the commune and landscape level in 3 provinces | NA |
| 2.9 | Community learning networks | DAE, PDA | Not done | | |

| | Topic (from the TNA and Training Plan, revised Dec 09 , Table 5b) | Primary Participants | •Actual Number of Training & Planning Sessions** | Target Key Results at Project Level w/contributions from Training | Actual Results at Project Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.10 | Incorporating gender in SLM | PGMAG | • Gender study conducted but no training conducted | Strengthened Gender Action Plans in 3 provinces at the PDA , PFA levels | Results of gender study considered in NAP |
| 2.11 | Training of Trainers | Selected individuals from PTT and departments | No formal sessions done | Network of trainers established in selected topics described in this list that will be prioritized by Departments | At least 2 PTT members are now key resource persons on SLM |
| 3.0 | To support mainstreaming | | | | |
| 3.1 | Developing communication products | DAE | 2 planning sessions(PNH) | More effective communication products | A number of communication products produced. Please see separate discussion |
| 3.2 | Causes effects of LD and incorporating SLM in local plans (for LGAs) | PFT, PDA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training session for D& D provincial facilitators (Kampot) • Training and planning sessions done in 2 provinces (PVH and KPS) | SLM is incorporated in extension programs of Provincial Facilitating teams in at least 3 provinces | |
| 4.0 | Strengthening the learning environment | | | | |
| • 2 Planning sessions (but did not lead to implementatio n due to resignation and non replacement of communicatio ns consultant) | Improved facilitation and communication strategies are incorporated in SLM extension strategies | PTT | | | NA |
| 4.2 | Group facilitation | PFT, TRT | Not Done | | NA |

| | Topic (from the TNA and Training Plan, revised Dec 09 , Table 5b) | Primary Participants | •Actual Number of Training & Planning Sessions** | Target Key Results at Project Level w/contributions from Training | Actual Results at Project Level |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | methods | | | | |
| 4.3 | Tapping and managing talent for SLM | PMT | Not Done | A strengthened learning environment is established within SLM PMT – PTT office and among SLM key partners. | NA |
| 4.4 | Knowledge Management | PMT, DAE | Not Done | | NA |
| 4.5 | Monitoring and Evaluation | PMT | Not Done | Improved M& E tools are incorporated in M& E systems | NA |
| 4.6 | English | PMT | • English training course, 2009- 2010 | Improved English communication | No review conducted |